

7 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to DD/I (Planning)

SUBJECT : Intelligence Communications

REFERENCE : Memo from Asst. to DD/I (Planning)  
same subject, dated 23 January 1968;  
with attachment

1. I have read your memorandum and staff study on the problem of intelligence communications with considerable interest. The need for rapid communication of critical intelligence is not new, of course. It is something we lived with throughout World War II, for example, when HF/DF plots of German U/Boat transmissions had to be established within minutes in Washington from data supplied by several score radio intercept stations thousands of miles apart.

2. To comment on the problem posed by the staff study:

a. I suggest that the existing communications capability available to the U.S. Government should be studied further and examined in detail before any decision is made to start from scratch with a completely new and radical system. I believe there are certain practical limits to the need or ability of the Intelligence Community, as such, to operate a separate and independent communications system. I have in mind, for example, the departmental responsibilities of military and State Department attaches. Departmental communications networks exist to serve these officials and creation of an intelligence communications system would not replace those networks.

b. The objective needs to be defined. Is it to create a communications capability to handle "critical" intelligence on a 10-minute basis, or is it to create a communications capability that "might have to provide for the transmission of something on the order of 26 million words a day"? There is little to be gained in speeding the flow of words into Washington only to have it bottleneck here. A 10-minute capability for "critical" intelligence is highly desirable. A 10-minute capability for 26 million words would be self-defeating. What is needed is a more selective screening process at the transmitting end that will give realistic priorities to the varieties of intelligence information. There is no real gain in sending by wire that which can just as effectively, in terms of final utilization, go by pouch.

c. So far as the NIS is concerned, the very nature of basic intelligence puts it largely outside the need for a communications continuum such as envisioned in the staff study. Any real speed-up in intelligence communications would benefit the NIS but is not critical from the over-all point of view of basic intelligence production.

Distribution:

Orig. & 1 - Addressee

1 - NH chrono

1 - SA chrono

1 - Attached to [redacted] Memo  
(filed: Planning & Coordination Staff Studies)

25X1A9a

25X1A9a